UnderStandingAmericaStudy

WEB SURVEY ACCESSIBILITY IN THE UAS

USC Dornsife Center for Economic and Social Research

Contents

INTRODUCTION

The UnderStanding America Study (UAS) is a research study in which participants fill out online surveys. In general, in order to be able to participate study members must have access to the internet or a computer. The UAS contact those who indicate that they do not have such access offering to provide the household with an internet-connected tablet in return for doing at least one survey per month.

Once invitees have become study participants, the ability to read and respond to email invitations to participate (or mailed notecards if no email is available) is required for participation. Participants must also have the ability to enter their unique username and password to access their private UAS panel pages, and to read and respond to survey questions. Helpdesk assistance is provided via email, phone and mail.

The remainder of this document focuses on the practices provided by the UnderStanding America Study (UAS) for the accessibility of its participant account pages and web surveys, and its level of compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act Standards for Accessible Design (ADA compliance).

1. SCOPE OF ADA COMPLIANCE IN THE UAS

ADA compliance is aimed at ensuring that all electronic information and technology is accessible to those with disabilities. Multiple groups can be considered in the context ADA compliance:

1. Without Vision

2. With Limited Vision

3. Without Perception of Color

4. Without Hearing

5. With Limited Hearing

6. Without Speech

7. With Limited Manipulation

8. With Limited Reach and Strength

9. With Limited Language, Cognitive, and Learning Abilities

Within the UAS the focus of ensuring accessibility is on the groups with vision disabilities, that is, groups 1 to 3.

2. ADA COMPLIANCE REALIZATION IN THE UAS

In order to faciliate ADA compliance within the UnderStanding America Study, the UAS follows the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG, https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/), wherever feasible.

The WCAG broadly falls into the following four groups:

o **Perceivable**: Using one or more of their senses, users need to be able to perceive and understand the website in some significant way.

o **Operable**: Users need to have the ability to navigate through the website and user interface elements, such as the ability to click a button either with a mouse, voice command, or other method.

o **Understandable**: the website content should be readable, understandable, and digestible to readers.

o **Robust**: the website's content needs to be developed keeping in mind how it will work across different types of browsers, both presently and in looking ahead to the future.

In the below default and available UAS support for each group is listed.

2.1. Perceivable

In addition to UAS default visual accessibility practices described in subsection 2.3, we are able to provide support for auditory accessibility by producing surveys that utilize the Accessible Rich Internet Applications (ARIA, https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Web/Accessibility/ARIA) roles and attributes. This allows screen readers to process and read out the survey screens. Creating screen readable surveys also include working with researchers to avoid the use of images, videos etc. that are not readily processed by these devices.

UAS support for auditory accessibility is available at additional cost. Contact us at uas-l@mymaillists.usc.edu for more information.

2.2. Operable

UAS surveys are by default navigated using a mouse or touch. Basic navigation through a keyboard is possible, but exact behavior is dependent on the browser that is being used by the respondent. UAS surveys work well with the most common web browsers, and can be optimized for auditory accessibility with the most common screen reader tools like JAWS, NVDA and Apple Voiceover. No direct support for voice commands is provided, but this functionality is part of all browsers and works particularly well in Chrome and Safari.

UAS support for enhanced keyboard navigation and screen reader functionality is available at additional cost. Contact us at uas-l@mymaillists.usc.edu for more information.

2.3. Understandable

UAS supports creation of survey content at desired reading levels through advice and consultation during the implementation process. UAS surveys are readily customizable in the presentation of content, e.g., with regard to structure (bulleted lists, summary sections, bolded keywords), color usage, contrast, error messages for providing assistance, informative hyperlink titles, subtitles and/or audio descriptions for videos, and font usage. Furthermore, UAS survey implementation

allows to simplify screens and make them more accessible by avoiding the usage of tables and other complex interfaces.

UAS support for all of the above is included at no additional cost.

2.4. Robust

To ensure their accessibility on current and future browsers and devices, the interface of UAS surveys is minimalistic. Surveys are implemented in terms of their styling and appearance using Bootstrap (https://getbootstrap.com), which ensures that survey screens are automatically displayed in accordance with available device screen size. In addition to this behavior, screens can also be simplified in terms of their structure and display to further cater for different browsers and devices.

UAS support for all of the above is included at no additional cost.